

God Through the Eyes of Philosophers

A Thoughtful Guide
for Curious Teens

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Dedication

For anyone who picks up this book—may it spark your curiosity and light up your heart.

Introduction

Throughout history, human beings have always asked one big question:

“How can we understand the existence of God?”

From ancient Greece to the modern world, philosophers and thinkers have tried to answer this question in different ways. Some used reason and logical arguments to show that God must exist. Others turned to inner experience and mysticism, feeling God’s presence deep in the heart and soul. And some looked at the order and harmony of the universe and concluded that there must be a higher and purposeful source behind it all.

This book follows the human journey of trying to understand God. It shows that the paths of philosophy and mysticism are full of different ideas, arguments, and images of God. We begin with ancient Greek thinkers, then move on to philosophers such as Plotinus and Aristotle, and later to great Islamic philosophers like Al-Farabi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), and Mulla Sadra. Finally, we explore the thoughts of major mystics such as Ibn Arabi. The book also looks at Christian philosophy and Western theology, especially ideas about creation from nothing and God’s power.

The goal of this book is to help teenagers and students gain a clear and overall understanding of how people have thought about God through philosophy and mysticism. It also aims to inspire curiosity and encourage further study of philosophy and the humanities.

By reading this book, you will discover that philosophy is not just about difficult and complicated ideas. It is the story of questioning, searching, and human experience as we try to understand the greatest questions of life.

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Chapter One

God as the Mind of the Universe

From Nous to the First Mover

Nous in Anaxagoras: The Beginning of the Universal Mind

Long before Socrates, ancient Greek philosophers were curious about one big question: “*What is the first principle of the universe?*” Some thought everything came from a single element—water, earth, or air. Their goal was to understand how the world and all living beings came into existence.

But there was a problem: **these simple elements couldn’t explain the order of the universe.** Why do stars move in perfect paths? Why do living things grow in harmony? Why does nature follow such a precise rhythm?

Then came **Anaxagoras**, who introduced a revolutionary idea: the universe is not just matter. There is a **great universal mind** that organizes everything. He called this mind **Nous**.

What is Nous? It is the **mind or intelligence of the entire universe.** Imagine it like the brain of a giant, cosmic clock, controlling all the gears so that everything moves in perfect harmony.

Anaxagoras had several key ideas about the world:

- All things, even earth and water, are made of **tiny, different particles.**
- These particles are always present, but **Nous gives them order.**
- Nous is the cause of movement and change; without it, the universe would be chaotic.
- Nous is separate from matter—it is independent—but matter **cannot achieve order or life without Nous.**

The importance of *Nous* is enormous because it represents the **first step toward the idea of God in philosophy**. Later philosophers like **Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus** interpreted *Nous* as God or the **first cause of the universe**.

In short, long before Plato and Aristotle, **Anaxagoras showed that the universe cannot exist without order and intelligence**, opening the long philosophical path toward understanding God.

Nous in Plato: The Rational Architecture of the World

After Anaxagoras, the great Greek philosophers, like Plato, continued exploring the idea of *Nous*. Plato believed that the world is not made of matter alone; behind everything, there is a rational order. This order is what Anaxagoras called *Nous*, the mind or intelligence of the universe.

Plato said that the world needs a “designer,” someone or something to give direction to everything. He called this designer the *Demiurge*. The *Demiurge* shapes the world from chaotic, shapeless matter according to perfect ideas and forms. Think of it like a master architect who builds a huge, complex structure from simple raw materials, so that everything ends up in harmony and order.

Here, the idea of *Nous* starts to connect with the concept of God. Later philosophers saw that this supreme intelligence organizes the universe and gradually called it “God.” In other words, in philosophy, God initially represented the rational mind that orders the world, not necessarily a personal being like a human.

Nous in Plato’s view plays a very important role:

- It is the cause of order in the universe.
- It makes the world understandable and harmonious.
- It is the source of ideas and rationality in the world.

In this way, Plato introduced *Nous* as the supreme intelligence and organizer of the world, paving the way for later philosophical and mystical ideas about God in Greek and Islamic thought.

Nous in Aristotle: The Unmoved Mover

After Plato, Aristotle continued exploring the idea of *Nous* and explained it in his own clear and systematic way. He observed that the world is not only existing but always in motion: stars move, plants grow, and humans think and act. This made him ask a very important question: what causes everything to move without moving itself? The answer he proposed was the idea of the **Prime Mover**.

Aristotle described the Prime Mover as the ultimate source of all motion and change. It is a perfect and unchanging being, completely self-sufficient, which everything else depends on. All things in the world are connected like a chain: every being is influenced by a more perfect being, and at the very top of this chain is the most perfect being, to which everything ultimately refers. This is what later philosophers recognized as God.

Nous, in Aristotle's philosophy, is pure intellect and perfect thought. It is the source of order, movement, and rationality in the universe. It makes the world understandable and harmonious. Humans also have *Nous*, but in a limited form called active intellect, not the universal intelligence that governs

everything. Aristotle's insight was revolutionary: he showed that the world cannot exist without cause and order. Everything depends on the Prime Mover, the ultimate intelligence, for its existence and movement. This idea became a foundation for later philosophers, including Islamic thinkers like Avicenna and Al-Farabi.

Nous in Plotinus: The Emanation from the One

After Aristotle, Neoplatonic philosophy emerged, and one of its most important thinkers was Plotinus. He continued exploring the idea of *Nous* and explained it as part of a hierarchical chain through which the universe comes into existence. At the very top of this hierarchy is the **One**, the ultimate source that is beyond all existence and even beyond intellect itself.

From the One, *Nous* (Intellect) emanates. This *Nous* is the universal mind, the guiding intelligence of the cosmos. It brings order and harmony to the world, making everything function according to reason and structure. In simple terms:

- **The One** = the ultimate, infinite source
- **Nous** = the supreme intellect, the organizer, and the rational cause of the universe

Nous ensures that ideas and beings emerge according to divine order and wisdom. In Plotinus' view, *Nous* is similar to the concept in Anaxagoras and Plato, but with an important difference: it is part of a chain of emanation, flowing from the One rather than existing independently.

Plotinus is especially significant because he showed that the universe is not just matter, nor merely intellect, but a series of higher manifestations that ultimately return to the absolute source. This idea deeply influenced Islamic philosophy and mysticism, and the concept of *Nous* and the chain of emanation can be seen later in thinkers like Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Mulla Sadra.

Chapter ۲

Different Conceptions of God in Philosophy

Different Conceptions of God in Philosophy

From the very beginning of philosophy until today, humans have always tried to understand what God is, how God relates to the world, and what God's relationship with humans is. These questions have led to the emergence of various conceptions of God, each opening a new window to meaning and existence.

At a broad glance, several main images of God have emerged throughout the history of philosophy:

First, God as a Perfect Being

In this view—prominent in Aristotle, Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Saint Thomas Aquinas—God is considered a perfect being at the top of the hierarchy of existence. God is complete, independent, necessary, and the cause of all things. He possesses intellect and will, and the universe originates from Him and depends on Him.

This view suggests that the world cannot exist without God because everything depends on Him. God is a being who needs nothing and from whom everything springs forth. He has intellect and will and organizes the world so that beings can exist and act.

Thinking of God as a being makes Him somewhat relatable in a personal sense, yet He remains far superior and more complete than all other beings. His perfection means He lacks nothing and is the source and origin of everything. Simply put, God can be

imagined as the supreme being and the initiator of the chain of existence. Everything originates from Him and depends on Him, but He Himself is dependent on nothing. In this view, God is not just an unknown power; He is a perfect being with intellect, will, and absolute power who created and organizes the universe and all its creatures.

God as Existence

In Islamic philosophy, thinkers such as Mulla Sadra and Ibn Arabi conceived God as absolute existence. This perspective differs from seeing God as a being. When we consider God as a being, He is a superior and perfect entity above other creatures. But when we see God as existence itself, He is the origin of all being. All creatures possess a degree of His existence, and nothing can exist without Him.

In this view, God is not merely a supreme being; He is the principle and reality of existence, and the world and all creatures are dependent on Him. God is infinite and immaterial, beyond time, space, or matter. All things, from the simplest to the most complex, are manifestations of His existence. The universe and all beings are expressions and manifestations of God's being, but God Himself transcends these manifestations.

This conception opened the way in Islamic philosophy toward deeper ideas about the emanation (*sudūr*) and manifestation (*tajallī*) of the world and inspired mystical thought in Islam.

God as Light

In Islamic philosophy, especially according to Suhrawardi, God is conceived as absolute light. This conception differs from God as a being or existence. When God is light, He is the source of illumination and truth, and the world and all creatures are manifestations of this light.

In this view, God not only exists but illuminates all of existence and gives it order. All beings are like rays of this divine light, and without it, none of them could exist or be understood.

Characteristics of God as light:

- Absolute illumination: God is pure light and truth, illuminating everything and making it comprehensible.
- Cause of manifestation: The world and beings are reflections and levels of God's light.
- Immutable and perfect: God's light is constant, complete, and without flaw or deficiency.

This conception positioned God as absolute light, making all beings possible and showing that everything in existence originates from a single, luminous reality. It paved the way for Islamic philosophy and mysticism to explore ideas of emanation and the manifestation of the world.

God as Intellect

In ancient Greek and Islamic philosophy, God is sometimes conceived as the absolute intellect and mind of the universe. This idea began with Anaxagoras' concept of *Nous* and was developed by Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and later Islamic philosophers like Al-Farabi and Avicenna.

In this perspective, God is not only a being or light but the supreme intellect and organizer of the world. The universe cannot be orderly, understandable, or harmonious without God's mind. Everything, from the movement of stars to the behavior of living creatures, follows the divine intellect.

Characteristics of God as intellect:

- Pure intellect: God possesses complete awareness, shaping and guiding the universe.
- Human intellect: Humans have a limited form of intellect that can grasp some of the world's order, but God's intellect is absolute and complete, and all things originate from Him.

This view directed philosophy and mysticism toward understanding the emanation of the world and the rational manifestation of beings, showing that everything in the universe, even living creatures, reflects the supreme intellect.

God as Love

In philosophy and mysticism, some philosophers and mystics regard God not merely as being, light, or intellect, but as the source of absolute love. In this perspective, the world and creatures are manifestations of God's love, and humans can experience this love.

In Islamic mysticism, Bayazid Bastami and Rumi are prominent examples. Bayazid saw God's love as a light in the human heart that draws humans toward unity and truth. Rumi considered God's love as a force connecting all beings and liberating humans from selfishness, linking them to the ultimate reality.

In Christian philosophy, Augustine also considered God the source of absolute love. Meister Eckhart emphasized the flow of divine love within humans, seeing it as a direct and living experience that connects humans to ultimate truth.

Characteristics of God as love:

- Ever-flowing affection: God's love constantly connects the universe and humans.
- Source of creation: The world and beings are manifestations of God's love.
- Experiential for humans: Humans can feel God's love and be united with it.

In this view, God is not only the cause and order of the universe but also the source of feeling, care, and connection among all beings. This conception leads philosophy and mysticism toward a personal and spiritual experience of God, showing that divine love is a fundamental force in existence.

God as Law

In modern philosophy and some Western philosophical thought, God is sometimes conceived as the principle of order and law in the universe. In this view, God is not personal or endowed with will and feeling but is the eternal laws that govern all motion.

Philosophers such as the Deists believed that after creating the universe, God set it in motion according to natural laws and no longer intervenes directly. This vision portrays God as absolute order and law rather than as a personal being.

Characteristics of God as law:

- Impersonal and constant: God is the laws of the universe and does not change.
- First cause: The world is shaped according to divine laws.
- No direct intervention: Everything follows natural, logical order.

This perspective turns God into the principle of cosmic order rather than a personal entity, guiding philosophy toward understanding the first cause and natural laws, and inspiring modern philosophical thought.

God as Nature

In some modern philosophical views, especially according to Spinoza, God is the entirety of existence and nature. In this conception, God is no longer a personal being or absolute intellect but the universe itself, and all beings are expressions of divine existence.

Spinoza claimed that God and the world are one: everything that exists is part of God, and nothing exists outside of divine existence. Trees, planets, plants, and humans are all different manifestations of God.

Characteristics of God as nature:

- Impersonal and all-encompassing: God includes all existence and is not limited to one being.
- All beings as manifestations: Nothing exists independently of God.
- Everything follows universal laws: The world reflects divine existence.

In this view, God is no longer a personal being or absolute light but the totality of nature and everything that exists. This conception leads philosophy toward pantheism and the understanding of the universe as a single, unified divine reality, inspiring some modern philosophical and mystical ideas.

Chapter ۳
Philosophical Proofs for the
Existence of God

Proofs for the Existence of God from Aristotle's Perspective

Aristotle, one of the greatest Greek philosophers, asked an essential question about the world: “What causes everything to move and change?” He observed that nothing in the world is completely still; stars rotate in the sky, plants grow, and humans think and act. According to him, every movement requires a cause—something that initiates it. This view led him to a chain of causes: every change results from a preceding change. But where does that preceding change come from? Can we go back infinitely?

Aristotle believed that if this chain of causes continued infinitely, no real motion or change would ever truly begin. Therefore, there must be a starting point, something that initiates all movement but itself does not move. Aristotle called this being the “Prime Mover.”

The Prime Mover, in his view, is perfect, self-sufficient, and immutable. He saw the world as a vast machine that operates with precise and harmonious order—much like a clock whose gears move in perfect synchronization. However, the coordinated motion of these gears would be impossible without a central mover, and that central mover is the complete and first being.

Aristotle believed that this Prime Mover is what later philosophy and theology called God. God is a being that does not need any cause; if He did, He would no longer be the First Mover. He is pure intellect, and everything in the world moves according to the intellect and order emanating from Him. Humans also

participate in this intellect, but in a limited way; we grasp only a part of the universe's wisdom, while God's intellect is complete and absolute.

In conclusion, Aristotle's reasoning can be summarized as follows: the world is in motion, every movement has a cause, causes cannot continue infinitely, therefore there must be a First Mover, and that First Mover is God—a perfect, self-sufficient, pure intellect and the source of order and motion in the universe.

Proofs for the Existence of God from Avicenna's Perspective

Avicenna (Ibn Sina), one of the greatest Islamic philosophers, like Aristotle, pondered why the world exists and what its cause might be. However, he went a step further by introducing the concepts of the necessary and the possible to show that God's existence is rational and necessary.

Avicenna divided beings into two categories: possible beings and necessary beings. A possible being is something that may or may not exist. Its existence is not essential, and it may come into being for various reasons. A necessary being, on the other hand, is one whose existence is essential and cannot not exist. This being is independent and self-sufficient. He argued that all possible beings, including the world and material objects, cannot exist by themselves because a possible being requires a cause to exist.

Avicenna asked, "If every possible being is caused by another, can the chain of causes be infinite?" His answer was no. If the chain of causes were infinite, nothing would ever begin to exist, and the world would not exist. Therefore, there must be a

necessary being whose existence is essential, who requires no other cause, and who is the source and cause of all possible beings. This necessary being is what we call God.

Avicenna described the attributes of this necessary being: self-sufficient and independent, not dependent on anything else; eternal and perfectly complete, free from any imperfection or deficiency; the cause and source of all beings, from whom everything emanates and depends. God possesses absolute intellect, and His perfect and rational wisdom governs the order of the world.

Avicenna explained that the world and beings derive their degrees of perfection and existence from God, much like sunlight provides light and life to the world. God's existence, therefore, ensures the existence and perfection of all things.

In summary, Avicenna's reasoning is as follows: the world and its beings are possible beings and cannot exist on their own; all possible beings require a cause; the chain of causes cannot be infinite; therefore, there must be a necessary being. This necessary being is self-sufficient, perfect, absolute intellect, and the cause of all things. All beings are manifestations of His existence. Through this reasoning, Avicenna demonstrated with philosophical precision that the existence of God is not only possible but necessary and rational.

Proof for the Existence of God from Sheikh al-Ishraq (Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi)

Sheikh al-Ishraq, or Suhrawardi, one of the most important Islamic philosophers, offered a perspective different from

philosophers like Aristotle and Avicenna. He asserted that God is Absolute Light, and the world and all beings are manifestations and emanations of this Light.

Suhrawardi believed that all entities in the world are degrees or levels of Light. Just as sunlight radiates from the sun, beings emerge from the Light of God. This perspective implies that the existence of the world and its entities is impossible without the primary Light, which is God.

Sheikh al-Ishraq emphasized the manifestation of God in the world. Every being and every thing in the universe is a reflection of God. These reflections are different degrees of Light emanating from the Absolute Light. Without God, no manifestation or being could exist.

In Suhrawardi's view: the world and all beings are degrees of Light. All these lights must have an ultimate, absolute source. This absolute source of Light is God. God is Absolute Light, perfect, independent, and the cause of the manifestation of beings. The world and all entities are reflections of God's Light. Thus, Sheikh al-Ishraq, through the reasoning of Light and manifestation, demonstrated that the existence of God is rational and necessary, but in a symbolic and mystical way that would later influence Islamic philosophy and Mulla Sadra.

The "Siddiqin" Proof of Mulla Sadra

We perceive various existences around us, yet Mulla Sadra asserts that what is truly real is the "Reality of Existence" itself. All other properties and forms are merely secondary manifestations of this primary truth. From this perspective,

existence is a unified and singular reality that, while one, possesses countless degrees.

Another crucial point is that this Reality of Existence never allows “nonexistence” or nothingness. What we perceive as destruction or annihilation is actually the end of a limited, specific form of existence, not the annihilation of existence itself. Existence owes its essence to itself, not to anything else.

When we examine existence in itself, we find it is equivalent to perfection, self-sufficiency, absolute power, and unlimited being. Any imperfection, weakness, limitation, or dependency arises from constraints imposed on a particular being, not from the truth of Existence itself. For instance, my existence and yours are limited and dependent because we rely on parents, air, and food; however, the Reality of Existence, being unlimited and absolute, has no such needs.

Looking at the world, we realize that all beings around us—from the tiniest particle to galaxies—are limited, dependent, and transient existences. This is clear evidence that this world is not the pure and unbounded Reality of Existence; rather, it must be a reflection and shadow of an infinite and complete Existence, which is the source of all these limited existences. Just like waves in the sea, which are themselves water yet have no independent existence apart from the vast ocean.

Ontological Argument for the Existence of God by Saint Anselm

Saint Anselm, a Christian philosopher in the 11th century, aimed to show that God exists and that this can be proven through thought and logic. He argued that God is a being greater and more perfect than any other, and nothing can be greater than God. This definition formed the basis of his argument.

Simply put, if we can conceive of God in our mind, then He must also exist in reality. A being that exists only in the mind is less than a being that exists both in the mind and in reality, which is greater. Anselm argued that the being that is the most perfect must possess all perfections. One of these perfections is real existence, because a real being is greater and more complete than an imaginary one. Therefore, if God exists only in our minds, He is not perfect. To be the most perfect being, God must exist in reality.

The characteristics of God in this argument are that He is the greatest and most perfect being, His existence is necessary and undeniable, and all perfections, such as intellect, power, and existence, reside in Him.

Thus, Anselm showed that even without seeing or experiencing the world, we can understand through reason and logic that God exists. This is a philosophical and abstract argument, relying on the definition of God, which later influenced Western philosophy, with philosophers like Descartes expanding on it.

Kant and the Moral Argument for the Existence of God

Immanuel Kant, a great German philosopher of the 18th century, argued that traditional logical proofs for the existence of God are insufficient. We cannot prove the existence or

nonexistence of God purely through logic. However, Kant emphasized that belief in God is necessary for a moral and ethical life.

Kant stated that humans naturally desire to do good and to establish real justice and goodness in the world, but in reality, the full result of good actions is not always achieved, and perfect justice is not always evident. Therefore, there must exist a being who guarantees real justice and goodness and perfects the moral path of humans. This being is God.

Simply put, humans strive for goodness and moral perfection, and since these are not fully realized in the real world, the existence of a perfect and rational being is necessary to establish absolute justice and goodness. This perfect and rational being is God.

According to Kant, the characteristics of God are that He possesses absolute reason, perfect justice, and serves as the foundation and guarantor of human moral perfection. His existence is essential for human moral life, even if it cannot be proven through pure reason.

Kant concluded that while traditional logical arguments for God's existence may be insufficient, belief in God is rational and necessary for humans to achieve true moral perfection and live an ethical life.

Chapter Four
The Origin of the Universe and the
Emanation of Beings from the
Philosophers' Perspective

The Origin of the Universe: Emanation or Creation from Nothing?

Throughout history, humans have always wondered how the universe and beings came into existence. Some theologians, both Christian and Islamic—such as Augustine in Christianity and Ibn Taymiyyah or Al-Ghazali in Islam—believed that God has the power to create the universe *ex nihilo*, that is, from nothing. According to this view, before creation, nothing existed, and the universe came into being solely through the will and absolute power of God. In other words, the world was created from nothingness.

However, philosophers followed a different path. They looked to the thinking of Parmenides, the Greek philosopher who stated: “Nothing is nothing, and Being is Being.” From his perspective, it is illogical for nothingness to become something; just as an odd number cannot turn into an even number, nothing cannot produce being. Therefore, nothingness cannot generate existence because nothingness truly means *nothing*.

This issue led philosophers to an alternative solution. To explain the relationship between the One and the universe, Plotinus proposed the theory of emanation. He stated that everything flows or emanates from the One, and the further beings are from the One, the less intense and perfect their existence becomes.

Later, Muslim philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Suhrawardi, and Mulla Sadra considered this theory to be rational and argued that creation is not the production of

something from nothing, but rather a form of emanation or manifestation of the universe from God.

In the theory of emanation or manifestation, the universe is like a spring flowing from the primary source—God. Since God is perfect, existence flows from Him naturally. According to this view, all beings are manifestations of the divine essence, and there is no alienation between the existence of the world and absolute existence; rather, there is a kind of ontological kinship and dependence. Of course, within this hierarchy, the intensity and strength of existence vary, particularly for humans, who, through their free will and choices, can elevate their own level of existence and achieve greater perfection.

In this perspective, God's will is not associated with nonexistence or contradiction; rather, the universe is one of the countless manifestations of the Divine Reality. The world does not come from nothing; it is a ray of divine existence manifested in varying degrees.

Plotinus and the Problem of Emanation

Plotinus, the great philosopher of ancient Greece, was one of the most important thinkers to present the problem of emanation in a systematic and philosophical way. He aimed to show how the universe and all beings emerge from a single, absolute source. To understand Plotinus, one must also consider Parmenides, who had said, "Nothing comes from nothing." In other words, that which does not exist cannot come into existence. This idea led Plotinus to seek an explanation in which beings and the universe emanate from an already actual and complete source, rather than being created from nothing.

Plotinus argued that the source of everything is one and absolute. He considered this One as the cause and origin of all beings, completely perfect and without any deficiency. All beings must originate from this One because nothing can come from nonexistence.

Plotinus introduced the concept of **emanation**. Emanation means that beings and the universe proceed from the absolute One, rather than being created from nothing. This emanation occurs in a hierarchical order: first, the absolute One, which is the origin of all things and is perfect and flawless. Next comes the **Nous** (Intellect), which is the result of the manifestation or emanation from the One. Following the Nous is the **World Soul**, which emanates from the Nous, and finally, the material world and natural beings, which are the lower and more diverse manifestations. This hierarchy demonstrates that all beings gradually emerge from a single source, and none originates from nothing.

Thus, Plotinus concluded that the source of the universe must be an actual, perfect, and unified being—a concept that later continued in Islamic philosophy, particularly in the works of Ibn Sina, Mulla Sadra, and the Sufis.

Creation and Emanation in Al-Farabi

Al-Farabi, one of the greatest Islamic philosophers, sought to explain how the universe and all beings emerge from their ultimate source and how the order and harmony of the world can be understood. He believed that the origin of everything is an absolute and perfect existence, which itself depends on nothing and from which everything else emanates. This origin

corresponds to what Plotinus called the “absolute One,” and Al-Farabi connected it with intellect and the natural order of the world.

Al-Farabi explained that this absolute existence gradually emanates intellects and lower beings. The first to emanate is the **First Intellect**, which is complete and the origin of all other affairs. From the First Intellect, the Second Intellect and the subsequent intellects emanate, and in succession, other levels of existence continue to emanate until reaching the material world and nature. This hierarchy demonstrates that all beings in the universe depend on the ultimate source and its emanation, and nothing can come from nothing.

In this way, Al-Farabi clarifies the philosophical path: the universe is the result of the emanation and manifestation of perfect intellect and absolute existence. This idea inspired many later philosophers, including Ibn Sina and Mulla Sadra, and became a foundational concept in Islamic philosophy.

The Problem of Emanation in Ibn Sina

Ibn Sina, the great Islamic philosopher, held that the universe and all beings originate from God, and that the existence of everything depends on the ultimate cause, which is God. Like Al-Farabi and Plotinus, he believed that nothing can come from nothing. Therefore, the universe and all beings cannot exist without an actual and real source.

Ibn Sina argued that the origin of everything is a necessary and perfect being, which depends on nothing and whose existence is absolute and essential. This necessary being is God, the primary cause of all beings and the reason for the existence of the universe.

The problem of emanation in Ibn Sina's philosophy is presented hierarchically. From the necessary being first emanates the **First Intellect**, a perfect and rational being that becomes the source of all other intellects and beings. From the First Intellect emanate the Second Intellect and the lower intellects, and gradually the various levels of existence take shape until reaching the material world and natural beings. This emanation is not creation from nothing; rather, it is the unfolding and manifestation of God's existence.

Ibn Sina maintained that the universe exists in a purposeful and rational manner. Every being is a reflection of God's absolute existence, and nothing can exist without a true source and cause. This idea clarified the path of Islamic philosophy and provided a foundation for the later thought of Mulla Sadra and other philosophers.

Ibn Sina also emphasized that the emanation of causes and effects in the universe follows a hierarchical order corresponding to the perfection of beings. Each being, according to the degree of its existence, reflects different levels of emanation, and all these hierarchies indicate the intellect and absolute perfection of the ultimate source.

Thus, Ibn Sina's philosophy provides a logical and rational explanation of the problem of emanation and the origin of the universe, showing that all beings and the universe are manifestations of God's absolute existence, and nothing comes from nonexistence.

The Problem of Emanation in Suhrawardi (Sheikh al-Ishraq)

Suhrawardi, also known as Sheikh al-Ishraq, held that the universe and all beings emanate from **absolute light**, or the divine light of God. He believed that nothing can come from nothing, and that the universe and beings cannot exist without a real source. Like Ibn Sina, he relied on the problem of emanation, but expressed it differently, in terms of light and illumination.

Suhrawardi stated that the origin of all beings is the **First Light**, the absolute light, which is perfect and independent. From this absolute light, other lights emanate, and each light gradually contributes degrees of light and existence to the universe. This hierarchy of lights continues until it reaches the material world and natural beings, with every entity being a reflection of the primary light.

In Suhrawardi's philosophy, each being occupies a place and rank in the hierarchy according to the intensity of its light. The brighter and more perfect beings are closer to the absolute light, while material and natural beings are the lesser-lighted manifestations of the primary light. Therefore, the universe, with its diversity of beings, simultaneously reflects a harmony and continuity emanating from the absolute light.

Emanation and Manifestation in Mulla Sadra

Mulla Sadra, the greatest Islamic philosopher of the Safavid era, explained the process of emanation and manifestation with a deep and philosophical perspective. He believed that God's existence is absolute and infinite, and all beings in the world are manifestations and degrees of this absolute existence. No being can exist without a source, and nothing comes from nonexistence. Therefore, everything emanates from God's necessary being, which is the essence of emanation.

In Mulla Sadra's philosophy, emanation does not mean creation from nothing; rather, it signifies the manifestation and unfolding of different degrees of existence from God's absolute being. The absolute existence, like an infinite light, reveals itself in a hierarchy of existence. At the highest level is the necessary being, which is independent and perfect. From this being emanates the Intellect, and subsequently, the world and various beings gradually manifest according to the degrees of existence.

Mulla Sadra also emphasized that all beings are different manifestations of God's existence. Each being, according to its level of perfection and existence, reflects a degree of the absolute manifestation. Material and natural beings are degrees of this emanation, forming an orderly and harmonious hierarchy—just as rays of light emanate from the sun, with their intensity and color changing depending on distance and obstacles.

Emanation in Ibn Arabi

Ibn Arabi, the greatest Islamic mystic and philosopher, explained the problem of emanation with a precise mystical language. He believed that God is absolute and infinite, and all

beings in the world are manifestations and reflections of this absolute existence. No being can exist without a real source, and nothing arises from nonexistence. Therefore, all beings and the universe emanate from God, and their existence depends on Him.

Ibn Arabi expressed the concept of emanation in terms of the manifestation of God's Names and Attributes. Each being reflects a divine attribute, and each Name or Attribute, through its emanation, brings a particular existence into the world. For example, the divine Light manifests itself as illumination and material beings, while attributes such as Power, Wisdom, and Love sequentially manifest in the universe. This emanation is hierarchical and harmonious, with all beings—from the highest levels to the lowest—being manifestations of the absolute source.

Ibn Arabi emphasized that the universe is continuous and alive because all beings are in a state of constant divine manifestation. This view shows that the world not only exists but that all beings are dependent on God and reflect His absolute existence. Simply put, just as rays of light cannot exist without the sun, and each ray reflects the main light, all beings are manifestations of God, emanating from His absolute existence.

Chapter Five

The Heartfelt Argument for the Existence of od

The Heartfelt Argument for the Existence of God

Humans are not only rational beings; they also possess two essential dimensions:

١. The realm of reason (intellect)
٢. The realm of the soul or heart

While the intellect deals with reasoning and logic, the heart provides a subtle, intuitive, and inner form of knowledge. A person may not understand philosophy or grasp logical proofs, yet deep within, they may sense the existence of God. This perception is not merely emotional but represents an inner, heartfelt form of knowledge.

The Inner Realm of the Heart

When humans turn inward, they experience a deep, non-material world. This inner world is not composed of stone, wood, water, or earth, nor is it connected to any material element. It reveals that human existence has a dimension distinct from the material universe. This feeling indicates that there must be a subtle and refined dimension that resonates with the soul and the heart.

The Outer Realm of the Heart

When observing the outer world, humans see the astonishing order of the heavens, the earth, oceans, and living beings. The heart testifies that this order is not random; a deeper layer and higher realm in existence organizes everything. Thus, the heart senses that reality transcends the material world.

The Role of Mystics

Many mystics and sages emphasized the realm of the heart and inner intuition. They experienced the direct presence of God within themselves and asserted that understanding God cannot be attained by reason alone. Mystical and intuitive experience, cultivated through reflection, spiritual practice, and closeness to divine truths, testifies that an absolute and complete being encompasses both the universe and humanity.

The Importance of the Heart in Religious Texts

The Qur'an repeatedly highlights the role of the human heart:

- Faith is considered a matter of the heart: *"Those are the ones in whose hearts Allah has written faith"* (Qur'an ٥٨:٢٢)
- Revelation came to the Prophet's heart: *"The faithful Spirit has brought it down upon your heart so that you may be among the warners"* (Qur'an ٢٦:١٩٣-١٩٤)
- Peace and tranquility reside in the heart: *"Indeed, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest"* (Qur'an ١٣:٢٨)

- The heart is also the center of understanding and reasoning:
"They have hearts with which they do not understand..."
 (Qur'an ٧:١٧٩)

These verses show that in the Qur'an, the heart is not only the center of faith and peace but also a center of knowledge and understanding.

Conclusion

Knowledge of God is not limited to the intellect; humans can perceive God through the heart and the soul. This intuitive and inner knowledge, supported by mystical experience and observation, complements rational understanding, providing a fuller recognition of the divine.

The Heartfelt Argument for the Existence of God in the Bible

Beyond logic and philosophical reasoning, the Bible emphasizes that the **heart is the primary organ for knowing God**. Human beings can perceive the divine directly through inner experience, intuition, and faith, even without formal arguments.

Inner Heart

The heart allows humans to sense God's presence and to experience spiritual truths. The Bible repeatedly highlights that genuine faith and understanding of God come from the heart:

- **Purity of Heart and Seeing God:**
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

(Matthew 5:8)

This verse shows that God is perceived through the inner purity of the heart, not merely through intellectual reasoning.

- **Faith as a Heart Matter:**

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9-10)

Here, the heart is the source of true faith, where belief and inner conviction connect the human soul to God.

- **Treasure of the Heart:**

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)

This verse emphasizes that the heart determines our orientation toward God and ultimate reality.

Outer Heart – Witness in Creation

The Bible also presents the world as a mirror for the heart to perceive God:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." (Psalm 19:1)

When the heart contemplates the order, beauty, and harmony of creation, it perceives the hand of God directly. This perception is immediate and intuitive, a form of knowledge that complements rational understanding.

Mystical and Spiritual Insight

Christian mystics and saints emphasize that the **heart experiences God directly**:

- Inner prayer, meditation, and spiritual devotion purify the heart and make it receptive to divine presence.

- Knowledge of God through the heart surpasses mere intellectual grasp; it is an intimate, living connection.

Summary

The Bible teaches that:

- The heart is central to perceiving and experiencing God.
- Faith, love, and spiritual insight arise from the heart.
- Creation itself speaks to the heart, revealing God's presence.
- Rational understanding and intellectual arguments complement, but do not replace, heartfelt knowledge of God.

Thus, according to the Bible, the **heart is both the seat of faith and the organ of divine perception**, giving humans a direct, living experience of God's existence.

The Heartfelt Argument for the Existence of God in the Torah

In the Torah, human beings are seen as creatures capable of perceiving God not only through reason or law but also through the heart. The heart is the seat of inner awareness, faith, and moral intuition, enabling humans to recognize the presence of God in themselves and in the world.

Inner Heart

The Torah emphasizes that the human heart is capable of knowing and loving God:

- **Wholehearted Devotion:**
"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might."
 (Deuteronomy 6:5)
 This commandment shows that true knowledge and connection to God begin in the heart, through devotion, sincerity, and inner commitment.
- **Understanding and Discernment:**
- *"Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn."* (Deuteronomy 10:16)
 Here, the "heart" symbolizes the seat of spiritual understanding, moral discernment, and openness to divine truth. The Torah teaches that intellect alone is insufficient; the heart must be awakened to perceive God.

Heart's Witness in Creation

The natural world reflects God's presence, and the heart perceives it intuitively:
"The heavens declare the glory of God; the firmament proclaims His handiwork." (Psalm 19:1)
 When the heart contemplates the beauty, order, and harmony of creation, it recognizes that a perfect and infinite God is the source of all existence.

Ethical and Spiritual Insight

- The heart guides humans toward justice, kindness, and righteousness, reflecting divine attributes.
- Spiritual practice, meditation, and reflection purify the heart and strengthen the ability to perceive God's presence.

Summary

The Torah presents a heartfelt argument for God's existence:

- The heart is the center of faith, understanding, and moral insight.
- God is recognized intuitively and immediately through the heart.
- Creation and moral order testify to the presence of a perfect, wise, and infinite God.
- Rational knowledge complements, but cannot replace, the heart's direct experience of God.

In essence, the Torah teaches that **the heart provides a living, intuitive, and intimate perception of God**, affirming His existence beyond mere logic or intellectual reasoning.

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for Curious Teens

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